643
651 Mossi circle into several administrative districts, still continue to
178 make substantial annual gifts to the Mogho Naba (cowries, cattle, and a considerable amount of grain, millet and rice).

634 Payments Due the Kombemba (canton chiefs). Formerly each
651 canton held one or more ritual feasts each year, and the Mossi subjects, that is, the tengsoba (village elders, notables, and those in comfortable circumstances), regularly made gifts to the canton chief (cowries, goats, sheep, and roosters). The Peulh [Peul] gave cattle.

The canton chiefs also retained a portion of the payment made by the people for the benefit of the Mogho Naba.

[178] At the present time these traditional gifts are still made, but white or light gray roosters are more and more being substituted for livestock. [71]

661 Payments due the Ministers of the Mogho Naba. In order to
431 maintain good relations with the ministers, court officials, and
644 intermediaries between the emperor and his vassals, the canton
634 chiefs in former times used to present unspecified gifts to the high dignitaries at court when they paid their respects to the Mogho Naba. A certain number of cowries was given to the pougtiéma, first wife of the Mogho Naba (500 cowries equals two and a half francs, formerly 50 centimes).

A canton chief who has been called to Ouagadougou for some reason may choose not to call on the emperor, but he is obligated to bring cowries, a sheep, or a rooster to the minister who is head of the province in which his canton is located.

651 Common laws. (a) Regulation of market fees. Before the ar-
443 rival of the French, market fees at Ouagadougou were collected for the benefit of the Mogho Naba by a collector in his employ.

In important villages, fees were collected by Gourounsi [Grunshi] captives on behalf of the canton chiefs (kombemba).

651 (b) Hunting. In former times, before the fields were cleared
224 for seeding, the Mossi used to go out in groups of several villages
634 on hunting drives. Small game (partridges, guinea fowl, hares, etc.) were left to the hunters. On the other hand, a haunch of any quadruped killed (deer, gazelle, coba [a kind of horse antelope], etc.) was reserved for the canton chief.

366 for good fortune and health. Prevent all bloodshed in this market.
782 We also fear those who are quarrelsome and those who talk too much, those who provoke disorder." The chicken is the first victim to be sacrificed, and if the offering is accepted, it must have first fallen on its back and only then turned over face downward (this means that the gods of the place will protect the naba and the persons who will frequent the market). Next the goat or sheep is killed.

The new market is opened immediately after the sacrifice. Those present buy the women's fritters. Ordinarily, Mossi markets
[443] are held every three days. The news travels rapidly that such-and-such a village has a market, and thus the business of the market gradually grows.

Collection of fees. It is only later on, one or even two years
366 after the installation of his new market and when [79] it is successful, that the canton chief appoints a yaguinga (grandson, or, more
651 accurately in native terms, a sister's son (nephew)or son's son (grandson), of the naba or of a member of his family) or a Gourounsi captive to act as collector of market fees. (We shall list below the various fees for a place in the market as they were collected for the benefit of the naba before the arrival of the French.)

Transfer of the market. Upon the death of a naba (the emperor, a vassal chief, or even the chief of the village where the market is held), the market is temporarily set up in another place. In large towns, such as Ouagadougou, for example, there may be as many markets as there are sections. These temporary markets are called kim'dagha (market of the kimsé, that is, of the deceased).

When a new naba has been named, the market is moved back
366 to its former site and the reinstallation calls for new sacrifices of
782 fowl and livestock. That was why in 1897, when the market at Ouagadougou was being re-established, the emperor asked the captain who was in command of the post to provide a cow to be sacrificed along with a sheep and a rooster which he himself provided.

Likewise, whenever a hyena has run through the market (its
366 presence is discovered either by the tracks left by the animal or by
825 consulting the soothsayers), just as happens when a naba dies, the
787 market must be moved elsewhere for a few days. It is believed that if [80] a brawl should occur after a hyena had passed through the market, there would certainly be a death.

Scale of Market Fees Collected by the Mogho Naba and the Canton Chiefs Before the French Occupation

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At Ouagadougou two collectors had the duty of gathering market fees.

The Kos Naba (from kossé "to sell," and naba, "chief") collected a tax on every animal slaughtered whose meat was sold at the market.

The Ragh' Naba (from ragha, "market," and naba, "chief") collected fees on all other produce.

The fees were as follows.

Captives. 1,000 cowries per captive sold; fee paid by the seller.

Large animals. (a) Oxen, 250 cowries per ox slaughtered; cows, 250 cowries per cow slaughtered. (In addition, the hump of every head of cattle slaughtered was taken for the Mogho Naba and delivered to him that evening.)

(b) Donkeys: 200 cowries per donkey sold, paid by the seller.

(c) Horses: no tax was collected. Horses, being luxury animals and sought only by chiefs and a few [81] well-to-do persons (rakangba) were not put up for sale at the market.

Small animals. No special tax on sheep, goats, etc.

Dam (dolo, beer). No tax. The seller was supposed to present a gourd or canari of beer to the chief of her section (the emperor's minister) whenever she made some. This was called the lenga, that is, a "taste." This practice no doubt explains the lack of any tax on the beer merchants.

Cotton strips. Taxes graded from 20 to 100 cowries according to the size of the rolls of cloth.

Cotton. First collected in kind and then a tax of 20 cowries paid after the sale.

Grains and fats. Small millets, sorghum, rice, peanuts, millet that is sprouted to be used for beer, beans, and peas: for these kinds of produce, the Ragh' Naba and his assistants had special measuring devices, bowls of a sort, made of wood and used to collect payments in kind. All of the grains, including the millet used to make beer, were stored by the Ragh' Naba in granaries for disposal by the emperor.

443 651 Ready-made clothing, beads. No tax collected.

[82] Soumbala (kalgo in Mossi) [locust beans pressed into balls]. Payment in kind (one ball per seller).

Other spices. No fee paid.

Karite [shea] butter. Collected with a soutga (a kind of ladle), karite butter was used almost exclusively for the horses of the Mogho Naba.

Fritters and other cooked foods. Actually no fee was called for on these products, but the collectors demanded the payment of a tax in kind to provide their own food or that of the samand'kamba (servitors of the outer courtyard).

Salt. 300 cowries for each load (ox or donkey).

Hoes, axes. Each merchant provided a daba or an axe for work in the field of the naba. Nothing was collected at the subsequent market if all of the tools had not been sold in one day.

[306] Jewelry. No tax was collected. The jewelers who made bracelets and other jewels for the wives of the naba, as well as various harness parts, were exempt from all taxes.

Other markets. Fees collected for the benefit of the canton chiefs were about the same as [83] those paid at the market of Ouagadougou. In small markets, however, payments were made in kind. The edible products made up the food of the collectors, Gourounsi captives for the most part, who were prevented by their social status from having wives and so had no one to prepare food for them.

Chapter 5

Slavery Among the Mossi

567 We shall endeavor in the following lines to describe slavery as it existed among the Mossi before the French occupation.

567 173 We know that slavery has existed for a very long time in the land of the Mogho Naba, but, because of the total lack of dates in Mossi history -- handed down from generation to generation by the griot [heralds, drummers] of the naba -- it is difficult to determine when it was first introduced.

567 It is known, however, that the first slaves of the Mossi were all of Boussanga [Busansi] origin. The canton of Garango in what is

593 reprimand them, while the mother's role, here as elsewhere, is to indulge her children.

595 The children of different wives are quite fond of one another and often exchange help. When the father dies, the eldest son make no distinction among his brothers and helps them all as best he can. Polygamy seems to present no drawbacks in this respect.

When a man has several wives, his first wife (porkyéma) is mistress of the household rather than his mother. All the other wives are on an equal footing, even the slaves, excepting, of course, those for whom the husband has a special preference. As the number of wives increases, so does the authority of the first wife, who wants /39/ her husband to have as many wives as possible. Each wife has a separate hut where she lives with her children, and this avoids many a quarrel. The husband goes to the hut of the woman he desires, or he has her come to his own hut. When a man works in his field, all his wives and children must help him, because he feeds them all and gives them a daily millet ration; it is, accordingly, only fair that all should take part in agricultural work within the limits of their capacity.

593 443 421 Provided that a woman remain at her husband's disposal and help him in the fields, she is free to do as she pleases. She goes to market to sell the grain, the spices for sauce, and the thread to weave cloth, but the husband sells the fabric strips and the raw cotton. During the winter each woman may have her own field to cultivate with her children, and the harvest belongs wholly to her. The husband has no say in the matter. If the woman spins cotton, she sells it at the market or even to her husband; if she brews beer, she offers one jar to her husband, but if he entertains friends and wants additional jars, he must pay cash for them. It is not unusual for a woman to refuse her husband credit, for who knows when he would pay?

593 574 A woman may visit her relatives with the permission of her husband, who sets a return date. The woman rarely comes back on the date set, and the husband goes to fetch her himself, or he sends one of his friends with a piece of salt or a small gift. A woman especially likes to visit her relatives when she is pregnant or shortly after the baby's birth. She knows that she will be well cared for and especially that she will enjoy complete freedom. As a result, it is not unusual for a woman to leave her husband for several months and to return only after considerable coaxing. Most quarrels between one Mossi and another derive from their wives and from their debts; yet it may not be said, as a general rule, that women are unhappy or ill treated.

[578]

Chapter 2. Industries and Trading

●443 Such are the everyday tasks of all Mossi. To these must be added visits to the marketplace all through the year, and during the dry season work performed by certain guilds or certain individuals, in short, the various industries practiced by the Mossi.

443 571 /53/ Every self-respecting Mossi, be it man or woman, child or elder, must go to market at least once in a while, were it only to look... and to be looked at if he can don some handsome new clothes. To see the natives in their best finery, one must go to the markets which follow important feast days. At those times the marketplace is thronged with Yarsé and Peul as well as Mossi, and they all vie with each other in the richness and originality of their costumes. At other times people go to market on business, except for a few individuals who go there only to be admired even on ordinary days.

443 Every community of any importance holds a market every three days. Everything is arranged so the markets will not be too far distant from each other, and the villages near to one another will not hold markets on the same day to avoid competition. A native may, if he wishes, spend all his time at market, sometimes in one village, sometimes in another, for a market is always being held not far from where he lives. All the markets are not of equal importance. Some [554] villages of no great consequence in themselves are located at the crossroads of several routes followed by caravans and become important trading centers. The following Mossi markets are said to be especially popular: Pwitenga, Kaya, Rakay, Bélousa, Mané, Téma, Yako, and La.

Formerly these markets were slave-trading centers. Nowadays they deal mostly in horses, cattle, donkeys, sheep, goats, salt, kola nuts, native or European fabrics, and petty imported wares, such as matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers. Every important article has a section of its own. Butchers have theirs, and so have the traders in salt, fabrics, and kola nuts. All the millet beer is sold in one place, the sauce condiments and grain in another. The most important transactions, however, are carried on outside the marketplace, in the huts that travellers who intend to stay for awhile have hastily built in the Haoussa or Yarga quarter and sometimes among the Mossi. This is

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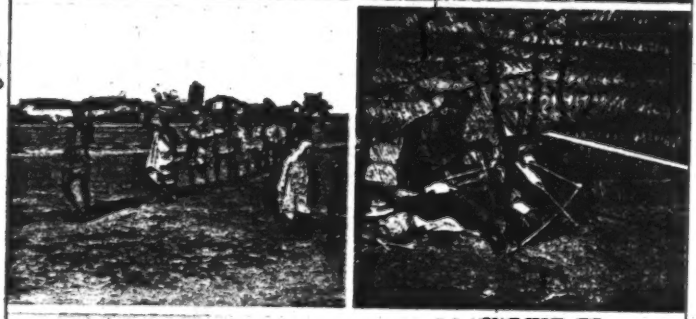

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Above: Inside a Soukala. Above: The Occupants of a Soukala.
Middle: Load-bearers. Middle: Weaver.
Below: Marketplace.

●443 why only a native who is used to the transactions and who frequents the market regularly would be able to estimate the amount of business carried out on the marketplace itself and in its neighborhood; he would also have to take into account the off season, which exists here as in any other trading center. (1)

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443 1. I shall list below, for what they are worth, the approximate prices of some goods; they apply to a year of average yield and were recorded shortly after the harvest. Prices increase rapidly as harvest time recedes into the past, and during famine years there is no set price.

Millet, 0.02 franc a kilogram; rice, 0.10 franc a kilogram; fabirama, 0.05 franc a kilogram; karite butter, 0.50 franc a kilogram; milk butter, 1.50 francs a kilogram; peanuts, 0.07 franc a kilogram; peanut oil, 0.50 franc a liter; one jar of ordinary millet beer, containing about six to eight liters, 0.20 franc; one jar of strong millet beer (tōsé), containing about six to eight liters, 0.40 franc; hydromel (bēsé), 0.15 franc a liter; chicken, 0.40 franc; average sheep, 3.50 francs for a ram, 4 francs for a ewe; large sheep, 8 to 10 francs; donkey, 25 to 30 francs; horse, 150 francs; a head of small cattle (no hump), 50 francs; zebu, 70 francs; goat skin, 0.30 franc; sheep skin, 0.50 franc; cowhide, 1 franc; salt bars, from 1.50 to 2 francs a kilogram; kola nuts, from 0.03 to 0.10 franc a piece; one hoe, 0.50 franc; clothes: strip of white cloth, 0.05 franc, about 0.60 franc a cubit; white blanket, 2 francs; indigo blanket, 3 francs; striped blanket, 4 francs; shirt, medium size, 2.50 francs.

443 /54/ These large markets are in the minority. In the village markets the transactions are carried out between natives who know each other, and they deal almost exclusively in native goods: millet,

443 rice, beans, karite butter, roasted peanuts sold in little heaps for one centime, raw peanuts, and all the spices for the sauce. Yarsé or Haoussa girls walk from group to group with small basins full of kola nuts, and chiefs and rich men buy one or two nuts which they usually share with their followers. Foreign traders sit under shelters of foliage or millet stalks and sell a few pearls, salt or copper bars, henna or blue dye, while bald-headed vultures hovering above the butchers point out their location to everyone. The meat on sale consists of a goat or sheep, sometimes a beef found dead in the bush or more rarely one slaughtered especially for the occasion. Some people bring chicks and occasionally a hen. This is about all that is to be found.

443 To these comestibles drink must be added. The women who sell
273 millet beer occupy a whole section of the market, and this section is not the least frequented nor the quietest spot. While butchers may be located by watching the vultures, it is possible to spot the tavern-keepers merely by cocking one's ears. Their presence is revealed by the cries, the beating of drums, the hubbub inevitably connected with a crowd slightly the worse for drink. The Mossi undoubtedly drink a lot of millet beer, but the beverage sold at the marketplace does not easily go to the head. The beer that is boiled again (tēsé /sic/) is far more dangerous with its rather high percentage of alcohol, and hydromel (bésé) is even more so. The latter is made of honey and millet flour boiled in water, to which barm is added to induce fermentation. These two beverages are truly potent, especially when drunk
[579] alternately. This is why brawls occur rather frequently, and sometimes real battles in which people are wounded. These are drunkards' quarrels. Men are indeed the same everywhere, and how many fairs without a drunk or two are to be found in our own country? It must be said, however, that more intoxicated natives are to be met with in Mossi country than in France.

1443 The market begins at about ten o'clock and usually closes at two; the important ones open around noon and last until nightfall. When we discuss the industries, we shall mention the other products which are sold there.

283 Weaving is the most widespread industry, the one that all men may
286 practice and all do practice to some extent. The cotton is ginned,
462 and the thread prepared by the women. Delafosse, in his work on the Siéna, has described the process accurately: "When the cotton has been separated from the husk, the seeds are removed with an iron rod

victorious heroes that they were only mortals. The thought of death is wholesome and beneficial.

The "bean feast" is so named because on that day the naba eats bean sauce for the first time in the year.

The naba's hoeing ceremony (na-kobo) is celebrated twenty-one days after the previous one, and like it, like the naky, always on a Saturday. When the naba of Koupéla was solemnly invested by the naba of Bélousa, he used to go with a large number of horsemen and much pomp to hoe a field located some distance from Koupéla. Nowadays he merely breaks ground on a path which connects his huts with those of his two prime ministers. He gives the first blows with the hoe to the sound of drums, and his men take up from there. If the Peul and the horsemen have come in sufficient numbers, they run races. As is usual in such circumstances, beer flows freely, and at the end of the day everyone is drunk. These festivities bring the naba a few thousand cowries offered by his subjects.

There ceremonies, naky, nakobo, do they not constitute a sort of homage to agriculture, do they not recall similar festivities celebrated long ago by the Romans and even today by the Chinese?

The market which follows each of these feasts is always crowded. Several beeves and large numbers of sheep are killed. Everyone makes a point of attending in his very best clothes, and the sight of this motley crowd is quite interesting indeed.

Chapter 3. Magic

Mgr. Le Roy, as already mentioned, defines magic as "the art of coercing into one's service the forces of nature, or harnessing the powers of the invisible world, through certain occult practices of a more or less religious character." This is what we shall now study. To put some order into a subject which is wholly lacking in it in the mind of the native, we shall first discuss the superstitions, then the sorcerers.

Like all primitive people, black or white, the Mossi are very superstitious. Were not our own ancestors, in the Middle Ages? Have superstitious beliefs, such as those concerning thirteen people at table,

5: Hammond E-5 (1954-1956) 1959
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they are so exclusively occupied with political or religious duties. In every case, they own fields and are dependent upon their produce for an important part of their subsistence.

Each Mossi village in the Yatenga holds a market every third day; markets operate in nearby villages on the intermediate days. There are few full-time merchants; men usually market their wares themselves and trade in items of European manufacture. Except for the sale of meat, it is a man's wives who sell farm produce. For marketing her husband's surplus millet, a woman receives a gift when the market closes.

Markets are most active in the early hours of the morning when meat and farm produce are fresh. By afternoon only a few merchants stay on, trying to sell their remaining produce to late-comers at greatly reduced prices. Social satisfactions derived from participation in the market are greatly valued; it provides an opportunity for meeting friends and kinsmen and for exchanging gossip and observations on one another's dress, the crops, and current political developments. The market is a place for making loans and receiving small gifts from kinsmen and friends, for flirtations and the arrangement of rendezvous, and for that casual sort of social interaction which is one of the principal pleasures of life in the Yatenga.

The Mossi farmer is dependent on the co-operation of the members of his lineage both for the success of his individual economic endeavor and for their support if his crop should fail. To be assured of this support, he must contribute generously to the maintenance of his position in the intricate network of rights and obligations which describes the relationship of the individual to his kin group. A constant exchange of visits and presents, ceremonial and economic assistance, and presence and participation in the affairs of the lineage are necessary to maintain his status within this group.

The nature of the social, economic, and emotional dependence of the individual on his kinsmen, his affinal relations, and his neighbors is such that his social well-being and economic success may properly be regarded as depending as much on his skill in manipulating this complex web of relationships as on his specifically economic endeavors. When a man decides to forego a second weeding of his fields in order to prepare presents and make the journey to the funeral of a kinsman, he is making a choice which, considered in the total context of the culture, is realistically in accord with his own economic best interest.

The farmer feels equally dependent on the deceased members of his lineage, the ancestral spirits (*kiemse*). If he feeds them a chicken, they may steal the soul from a neighboring stand of millet and bring it to enrich his own field. If properly treated, they can be depended upon to protect his shea nut trees from the high winds which might otherwise

000 We are now finished with Mossi industries, not because this work is complete or definitive of course, nor because I have listed and thoroughly studied all this people's trades. I have said enough, however, to draw a significant outline /537/ of these industries and to show that they are flourishing. We may now proceed to trading.

438 443 Among the Mossi, as everywhere else in West Africa, one must distinguish the internal trade of the territory from its external trade.

As among other Blacks, the internal trade formerly was, and still is, ensured by village markets which are held at the most important localities on set days, for example every three days, every five days, etc. Thus at Ouagadougou, before the arrival of the Whites, the market was held every three days. Now it is a daily affair.

443 782 At every village where a market was held, there was a "market chief" named by the village chief. The market chief performed a sacrifice for the market. On a large consecrated stone he killed a chicken, a goat, or a sheep which he provided himself. [776] The animal was offered to the sky divinity (Ounam) to preclude fights on the market place. When this was over, our chief gave a hand to Ounam in his pacifying role, with the aid of a club if necessary.

443 All internal and external products of the territory were retailed at those markets, largely by women whom the Blacks, as we know, are in the habit of sending to market with surplus goods to sell. We shall not dwell on the internal Mossi trade, which is the same as in all black countries, a small retail trade nourished and vitalized by the external trade. Let us, therefore, proceed to the latter.

439 The external Mossi trade is the usual trade of the Sudan, which we have already described and which operates from north to south and south to north. Livestock is led toward the south, kola nuts are brought toward the north, salt is brought back toward the south, etc. We should add to this the cotton strips which constitute one of the important Mossi products (they are made by the Yarsé and by the Mossi themselves, as we saw). Those cotton strips, like livestock, are taken south where cotton is poorly grown.

The Mossi grow tobacco in fields around their
248 4 INTRODUCTION

249 homesteads, where they also cultivate their most important cash crops, cotton and indigo, which are used in the manufacture and dyeing of cotton cloth.

136 The wild fauna of Mossi country include several species of antelope, deer, monkeys, rabbits, snakes, and wild pigs. Elephants roam the beds of rivers and streams and often destroy cultivated fields, while lions and hyenas distress the people by attacking livestock. The pools and rivers of Mossi country are inhabited by turtles, crocodiles, and various species of scaled and scaleless fish. Chickens, muscovy ducks, and half-domesticated guinea fowl are the most valuable species of birds.

231 The Mossi have long been famous for their splendid donkeys and
[492] horses. Donkeys are sometimes ridden, but they are used primarily as
[439] beasts of burden. Horses are important for military and ceremonial purposes and for export to the tsetse-fly zones to the south. The Mossi raise two main types of cattle: a zebu-like animal in the northern regions and a
[439] dwarf variety in the south. These animals are raised primarily for their milk and for export, and are seldom killed for meat until they are fairly old.
[771] Goats and sheep provide the main source of meat. Hog-raising is not wide-
[178] spread, and seems to be declining in importance with the increased observance of Islamic food taboos, which is on the uprise even among people who are still pagans.

135 The subsoil of Mossi country is not well known, but so far there have been no major discoveries of mineral deposits. The only known gold field
[301] remained unworked in aboriginal times. The Mossi do not like to wear
[325] gold ornaments, preferring jewelry worked from imported copper and
[439] silver. The northern Mossi worked their local iron in aboriginal times, but those in the south obtained this metal from caravan traders.

175 The nineteenth-century reports of Barth and other European travelers
439 indicate that the Mossi conducted a rather extensive foreign trade. At least
[443] six caravan routes passed through their territory, and traders such as the Hausa and Mandingo visited the important Mossi trading centers at Yako, Pouitenga, and Ouagadougou, where they exchanged Saharan and forest products for Mossi livestock and cloth.[3]

101 The Mossi belong to the Voltaic culture area, a name given by Delafosse to the regions drained by the Black, Red, and White Voltas and their tributaries. The area embraces parts of Mali, the Ivory Coast, Dahomey, the Upper Volta, and northern Ghana.[4] It includes a vast congeries of peoples such
[197] as the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Dagari, Birifo, Senufo, Gurmanche, Gurunsi, Lobi, Bobo, Tallensi, Konkomba, Dogon, Somba, Fulse, and Ninisi, all of whom speak languages belonging to the Gur or Moshi-Grunshi group of

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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marauding animals. Just twenty years ago, the six villages that lay closest to the river were gradually abandoned and their populations absorbed by other villages. As of 1955, three of these populations were still paying allegiance to their former chiefs—a fact that bears out the Mossi axiom that chiefs govern people rather than land. The three other chiefs had lost control over their followers, who had placed themselves under the protection of the chiefs of their host villages. On occasion, Nobere also lost villages to other districts. One such village, Rissoma, was taken away from Nobere and given to Djiba when one of the Nobere district chiefs had a dispute with the Mogho Naba.

The hub or center of Nobere district, like that of all Mossi districts, was Nab'tenga (also called Nobere Naba Tenga, or Na-tenga), the village of the district chief. This village was rather large and in many respects a replica in miniature of the capital of Ouagadougou. Like most Mossi villages, Nab'tenga was divided into sections, quarters, or neighborhoods called *saghse* (sing. *saka*), which included a number of compounds (*yiya*, sing. *yiri*; or *zaghse*, sing. *zaka*). The district chief's compound was called Nab'yiri. He lived there surrounded by his wives, unmarried daughters, younger children, and pages. His older male children lived in separate compounds within the same saka. The saghse of Nab'tenga included Ouidi, the saka of the Ouidi Naba; Balbalse, the saka of the Baloum Naba; Tansoba, the saka of the local war minister (Tansoba or Tampsobo); Baglere, the saka of the chief's serfs; Bendere, the saka of the chief's musicians; Ouedrange, the saka of the chief's grooms; and Pwese, the saka of the guardians of the chief's wives. Scattered among them were the saghse of noble families, smiths, the Moslem Imam, and other persons. The most important market place in the district was located about four hundred yards from the chief's compound.

The number and types of social and ethnic groups within the district and its villages reflected Nobere's history. When the French arrived, the district chief was Kaglere, a descendant of Ngado, who was a son of Mogho Naba Sagha I (ca. 1787–1803). Ngado had been sent to Nobere at the end of the eighteenth century to replace Naba Peka (a descendant of Naba Biligo), who had been deposed and killed by Mogho Naba Sagha during a civil war. The other chiefly descendants of Biligo, however, were not deposed by Ngado; they remained in charge of all but five or six of the major villages in the district. The chiefs of such villages as Ronse, Barkago, Tewarka, and Pinse are *yagense* (descendants) of Naba Biligo. The village called Passintenga was ruled by the descendants of a Busanga from Lenga called Passentre, who allegedly had been given a wife by Biligo. It is not

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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the Niger River area to the Gold Coast and Togoland. Important stops were made at such Mossi centers as Ouagadougou, Bere, Dakay, La, Mane, Yako, and Koupela.[7] At Dori, northwest of Ouagadougou, Barth found Mossi with "their fine donkeys, which are greatly sought after." He adds that in addition,

> the people of Mossi supply this market with gabaga, or "tari" [cotton bands], as Arabs near Timbuktu call them, cotton being extremely cheap in their country, so that in the great market places of that country, especially in Kulfela [Koupela, but really at Poitenga a few miles away], an indigo-colored shirt is not worth more than from 700 to 800 [cowry] shells. . . . Besides salt, cotton strips, dyed cloth, kola nuts, corn, and asses, some copper manufactured chiefly into large drinking-vessels is also brought into the market by the people of Mossi. However, I do not think they manufacture the copper vessels themselves, but bring them from Ashanti.[8]

Dubois, one of the early visitors to Timbuktu, tells us that he saw Mossi men carrying on their traditional trade in that city. Mossi traders dealt in such diverse commodities as millet, rice, manioc, peanuts, honey, kola nuts, peppers, dried onions, tobacco, dried fish, soap, iron, antimony, lead, cotton bands, straw hats, mats, jars, pots, and calabashes. They traded these articles for needles, mirrors, beads, coral, amber, tea, coffee, perfumes, carpets, fezzes, tailored robes, and salt. What impressed Dubois most was that while the merchants from Bamako, Djenne, Sansanding, and Touat enjoyed themselves at Timbuktu, "the great town of pleasures with the freest morals in the Sudan," and spent a great deal of money in gifts to beautiful women, "the Mossi did not waste their money, and left as soon as they had finished their business."[9] On the way south, Mossi and other caravaneers picked up goods from the Yatenga and other northern Ouagadougou provinces before stopping at the capital and then proceeding to the forest regions.

It is impossible to determine the exact volume of caravan trade that passed through Mossi country, and the amount of revenue it brought to the Mossi rulers. We can get some idea of this trade, however, by examining the customs reports on goods crossing the border between Mossi country and the northern territories of the Gold Coast in the few years just following European conquest.

The official figures for 1901 and 1903 are as follows:[10]

Year	Horses	Head of Cattle	Sheep and Goats	Loaded Donkeys	Bales of Cotton Cloth
1901.....	126	3,111	18,181	2,095	236
1903.....	196	6,624	30,392	4,294	269

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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Marc, who had the opportunity to check the volume of this trade in 1904 and 1905, estimates that about 16,000 head of cattle and 75,000 sheep and goats passed through the two customs posts in Mossi country. Furthermore, he believes that since "the Mossi also supply in part the markets of Togoland and the market at Bondoukou [Ivory Coast], one may assume a minimum annual export of 20,000 head of cattle and 100,000 sheep or goats. The import of kola nuts is at least 500 tons."[11] It is clear that this volume of trade could not have been achieved so soon after the French conquest. We can only conclude that it existed prior to the coming of the Europeans, and that it brought the Mossi rulers a considerable income.

The Mogho Naba's officials collected taxes from all caravans that passed through his capital. The caravaneers also gave the Mogho Naba important gifts, and he apparently traded with them, even if always to his own profit. Binger states that Mogho Naba Sanum forced horse traders from the Yatenga and Hausa merchants to sell him part of their commodities at one-hundredth the purchase price.[12] Crozat reports that Mogho Naba Wobogo

> appears to have had some business relations with white merchants who came to Salaga every dry season. He sent horses to them in exchange for silver. He claims that he had no reason to be pleased with their integrity, and that the silver they sent him contained plenty of copper. Some traders apparently came as far as Ouagadougou, bringing merchandise of German origin. There was one of them there during my stay. I was told that he was an important *marabout*, a shereef, perhaps an Arab or a Moor, for I was assured that he was very light in color. As was repeated to me several times, his relations with the king were limited to the solemn greetings on Fridays. He never entered the royal hut in spite of being an important marabout. He was at Ouagadougou for about three and one-half months, but he was compelled to return to the coast since the merchandise which he had brought was exhausted. He spoke no Mossi.[13]

All the caravans that passed through Mossi country were obliged to stop and give presents to the district officials. Those caravaneers who tried to elude taxation by going through the forest ran the risk of being attacked by local nobles, who usually confiscated their goods.

The Mogho Naba and the lesser chiefs had "market officials" who taxed the merchants in the markets of their territories. The officials at Ouagadougou, the Kos Naba ("sales chief") and the Raga Naba ("market chief"), were fairly rigorous in their exactions. The Kos Naba collected taxes in cowries for every cow slaughtered at the market, and also took its hump and gave it to the Nemdo Naba ("meat chief") for distribution in the royal household. He also collected taxes on every cow sold in the market, but

11: Skinner E-5 (1955-1957) 1964
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did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this, he occasionally took one or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys sold in the market were taxed at the rate of 200 cowries each. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were.

The Raga Naba collected taxes on the other commodities sold at the market. Cotton weavers paid him according to the size of their bolts of cloth, and cotton growers paid taxes on the sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed amounts, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- and ox-load of salt entering the market place was taxed. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the Mogho Naba's wives with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spear points, and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on the cereals, vegetables, and cooked food sold at the market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabashes of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the Mogho Naba's young grooms, who were not normally fed by the palace household. The beer sellers were not formally taxed, but they contributed a substantial percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel, who demanded the customary *lemlegha* ("taste before buying") more frequently and freely than ordinary buyers.

There is some evidence (mainly from European travelers) that the traders occasionally found the caravan and market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that the high taxes exacted by the Mogho Naba were "one of the reasons why Ouagadougou placed second [as a market town] and Mane was the commercial capital of Mossi country." Binger himself was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "On market day [at Ouagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring everything to the palace, whether it be millet, hoes, or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the discretion of the donors.*"[14] The italics are Binger's.

Some of the later Mogho Nanamse appear to have obtained a great deal of revenue through the sale of slaves. Most of these slaves were captured in raids among the smaller groups surrounding Mossi territory, such as the Samo, Gurunsi, and Busansi populations. According to Mangin, Gurunsi and Busansi countries were true granaries for the Mossi, who drew upon them according to their needs.[15] In early times the Mossi chiefs utilized these slaves (*yense*, sing. *yemba*) as agricultural workers, until Mogho

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o'clock in the morning to sell food to those migrants who have slept under the trees or in the deserted market place and who are going on towards Ghana or to Wagadougou. At about 8:00 or 9:00 A.M. the majority of the food-sellers leave for home, but some of them remain around all day to sell to those migrants who pass by in the few trucks which can travel during the heat of the day. The food sellers then return at about 5:00 P.M. because from this time until about 1:00 A.M. most of the trucks bearing migrants stop for water and to allow their passengers to eat and rest. The amount of money these women gross varies from day to day depending upon the amount of traffic and the time of year. During the off-season from June to October, when most of the migrants are home planting, a woman may make as little as ten francs per day. In contrast, at the beginning of the dry season when the young men are migrating in droves, the women may make as much as 100 francs a day, even though twenty or thirty women line the road at trucking centers. Many women welcome this opportunity to earn money because by so doing they are free to buy in the local markets the things they need.

MARKET

The Mossi have always conducted most of their commercial activities in market places even though some extra-market trading continually takes place. These markets were and are still divided into two main types: (1) those specializing in external trading, such as Pouitenga, Dakay, Kaya, Mane, Yako, La, Beloussa, Tema, Wagadougou; and (2) those specializing in internal commerce such as the markets in the villages and district centers. Of course, there is an overlap between the two types of markets in the sense that some people from the villages go to the larger markets to dispose of their commodities and, in turn, buy goods which they bring back for resale on the local level. Similarly, in former days some caravaneers visited the local markets to buy commodities and in the process disposed of their goods. However, the main pattern is for local commodities to filter into the large market centers through local markets, and for goods from these centers to filter back down to the local markets. The more goods and traders available, the more numerous and successful the markets are.

The Mossi do not appear to have any legends about the origin of markets in their country. When asked how and why markets first arose, they say that markets developed simply because people wanted to exchange goods with each other, or because the chiefs wanted markets in their own villages so that their people need not go to other districts. When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?"

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When one asks the Mossi directly, "What is a market?" the response to this question is: "A market is a place where people meet to buy and sell. People travel from one market place to another market place, and on the way they stop and see their friends in other villages. In the market one often meets and drinks with one's friends. People also go to distant markets to find things which they do not grow themselves or which cannot be found in their own markets."

Lending support to the Mossi contention that markets are places where one goes to buy and sell is the fact that most important markets in their country are found at the intersections of well-traveled routes. These intersections are often the places where chiefs have their capitals or compounds and this leads to the further idea that there is a connection between chiefs and markets, if only because the power of the chiefs makes markets possible. This does not mean, however, that the market is a purely physical entity which can only exist under the aegis of a chief, or that it is a purely economic institution. First of all, some markets, especially the smaller ones, are moved periodically without too much difficulty. Secondly, and of great importance, is the fact that whenever and wherever there is a large gathering of Mossi there is a "market." Indeed one can say that Mossi seldom come together in large numbers without coming to a market, or without creating one. It appears that the Mossi cannot interact with one another in any circumstance without also exchanging goods of some kind. For example, when a pagan chief holds the annual festival to his ancestors, the people who attend form a market in the vicinity of his compound. In those districts where the chiefs have become Christians and celebrate their birthdays rather than the traditional ancestors' rites, the people go to pay them homage and also "make a market." Similarly, whenever there is a funeral of an important chief, the people from the surrounding villages or even districts bring commodities to his hamlet and hold a market during the ceremony. On Christmas day, 1955, the people of Manga district "moved their market" about 500 yards to the Catholic Mission grounds where the Christians were celebrating their holiday. And after celebrating the prayers of Ramadan, the Moslems and their pagan townsmen repair to the markets to spend the rest of the day.

Most Mossi markets are inaugurated with religious ceremonies except those which develop by accretion—that is, by more and more persons coming voluntarily to trade. When a chief orders that a market be created or when a market is moved from one place to another place for any reason, the chief is the person who gives the order for the ceremony to be performed. First of all he speaks to his Raga Naba (market chief), usually a non-Mossi slave, about the need for the market or the desirability of changing its location. This man then consults a *teng-*

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This man then consults a teng-
443 787 [791] [776] *sobu* (earth priest) who must be also a *barga* (soothsayer) to find out where in a certain area it would be most propitious to locate the new market. After the *tengsoba* has ascertained the number and nature of the *tengkouga* (earth deities, plural of *Tengkougri)* in the designated spot, he tells the *Raga Naba* what type of sacrifice would be appropriate. A few days later the *Raga Naba*, his young assistant and the *tengsoba* take *zom kom* (milletflour), *dam* (sorghum beer), and a chicken (or goat) of the designated color, and go to the new market place. Here they pick out the stone or three which is the abode of the spirit or spirits, if there are several of them, and prepare to make the offering. The *Raga Naba* takes the millet water and pours some on the ground saying: "Good God, take this water, drink it, and take this other water (here he pours the beer), and give it to all the *tengkouga* in the villages so that the market will aways be good and there will be no fighting in the market!" Then the *Raga Naba* takes the sacrificial animal, and in the case of a chicken pulls off the neck feathers and cuts its throat, saying: "Good God, take this chicken and heed all the prayers of the people of this market!" He releases the chicken and waits to see whether it will fall on its back, thereby indicating whether the petition has been accepted. Of course, if it has not been accepted, a new site is chosen. If the sacrifice has been accepted, then the *Raga Naba* gives the chicken to his young helper to be cleaned and roasted. He then prays to the *tengkouga* who live in the market place and begs them to help with the market. When the boy brings back the dissected chicken, the *Raga Naba* cuts the liver into two parts; one for God and the other for the local *tengkouga*. He then says, "Now that God and the *Tengkouga* have eaten, they should drink," and forthwith pours out the remainder of the millet water. The *Raga Naba* then distributes the remainder of the roasted chicken among those present saying, "*Winnam dege* (God has accepted the sacrifice)." Only after this ceremony is completed can the market be opened.[9]

443 366 All Mossi markets, except those which specialize in one type of trading, have the same basic physical structure even though they vary in size from one-eighth of an acre to as much as four or five acres. We do not know the size of some of the traditional markets such as Pouitenga, La, Yako, Dakay, Belousa, Mane, and Tema, but we have Crozat's report that "The market at Wagadougou, which is found at Kounkounbissi, the royal residence ... is large" (Crozat 1891 : 4848). Since the market at Wagadougou was smaller than some of the other important ones, we may assume that some of the markets must have been quite large. At the same time, the physical appurtenances of Mossi markets are not elaborate, or were not so until today. In the

(9) See Zahan (1954 : 371) and Mangin (1921 : 55).

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larger markets there were and are solid stalls which are built and tenanted by merchants. In the small district and village markets, these stalls are built out of millet stalks which offer little but protection against the noonday sun on market days. Men build these structures for their womenfolk and for themselves. Some of the shelters which are not used for trading serve as galleries where the young blades look out and comment on the passing scene. Others are used as meeting places by adult men who sit and discuss all sorts of affairs. Still others are used by the older men, who gather there to arrange marriages between their several families, wait for gifts from younger men who seek wives, or spend a great deal of time reminiscing about their youthful adventures. Those persons who do not have such shelters sit in the sun or use grass lean-tos as protection from the sun.

Except in the large towns, Mossi markets are held between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 4:00 P.M. every fourth day. In the larger towns there are daily markets, but these remained unimportant until today when they serve a growing urban population. The capital city of Wagadougou now even has an "evening" market which opens about 4:00 P.M. and closes at about 9:00 P.M. In addition, numerous daily markets have sprung up in many of its wards. The three-day markets are, however, the traditional type, and they are still the most numerous through the country. By "three-day market" I mean that a market is held one day, not held over the two following days, and then held again on the next day. These markets also have a 21-day cycle from one *Ragakasanga* or *Rag'kasanga* ("larger market") on a Friday to another *Rag'kasanga* on a Friday three weeks later, a total of seven markets between the two important ones. The people give no adequate explanation for the observance of the three-day cycle or the 21-day cycle. One man did suggest that it took the women three days to prepare beer and this was why markets could not be held more often, but even he did not speculate about the 21-day cycle.[10] This same man did point out, however, that the cycle made little difference to persons who really liked to go to market, since it was possible for

(10) Zahan (1954 : 373) apparently found one of the few Mossi informants with a mystical bent; he reports that the seven three-day cycles of markets in the 21-day cycle have the following significance for the Yatenga people: "The first of these numbers explains the cycle of the person (7 symbolizes the complete person: male [to which the Mossi assign the number 3] and female [to which they assign the number 4], the second that of the creation." He believes that each market starts a new cycle, a beginning and an end: "the seventh market signifies the most perfect equilibrium: the one which exists between the universe, mankind, and the divinity." In a footnote he suggests that this sybolism is not too different among the Dogon, who are "ideologically and geographically close to the Mossi." Peter Hammond, who worked in Yatenga, could not find this kind of symbolism.

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such individuals to find a market everyday in one neighboring district or another.

Every Mossi market not only has its own schedule but is also part of a cycle of markets in the sense that its main customers can and do regularly attend two other markets on the two nonmarket days without missing their "own" market. Table 30 takes the district market at Nobere as the home market and lists the markets which Nobere's people can attend and the reasons they themselves give for going there.

TABLE 30

Markets near Nobere

		Distance Away	*Reasons for Going*
First Day:			
	Nobere		Home Market
	Manga	12 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Vooko	15 kilometers	Butter and Millet
	Twese	20 kilometers	Millet and Sorghum
	Binde	35 kilometers	Good Pottery and Mats "Very far and people do not go there very often"
Second Day:			
	Basgana	10 kilometers	Good Pottery
	Sakouliga	15 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
	Giba	10 kilometers	"To Have Fun"
Third Day:			
	Nobili	27 kilometers	"Good Millet"
	Pinse	6 kilometers	"Small Market; to have fun"
	Parougre	10 kilometers	"Good Millet and Pottery"

Nobere people scarcely ever go to Manga because the market there conflicts with their own and its one unique product, pottery, can be bought at Basgana on a day when there is no market at Nobere. A person is likely to go do Vooko when he wishes to buy butter and millet at cheaper prices than he can obtain in his own market. But he scarcely visits the Binde market unless he is there visiting a friend or relative. Nobere people think nothing of going to Giba or to Pinse to show off their clothes or to have fun at those markets. If any commodity is cheap there they take advantage of the prices, but in general they believe that they can obtain better and cheaper products at their own market.

It is now possible to find a great variety of products at Mossi markets, and the larger the market the more varied its merchandise. Apparently this was not always so. Crozart (1891 : 4848), who visited the country just before it was conquered, reported that in the market at Wagadougou, he found "millet, rice, millet beer, butchered meat, small cutlery, morocco-leather goods, basketwork and jewelry items,

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all of local manufacture and in great abundance. Local cloth is also very abundant. However, there are scarcely any imported objects salt, kola nuts, copper rings and extremely rare European fabrics. The salt always comes from the north. During my stay at Wagadougou I saw the arrival of a convoy of five or six small-sized mules loaded with this merchandise." Crozat felt that the Wagadougou market with its mainly local products was inferior to the markets at Woroudoy and Bobo-Dioulasso which he found less crowded, but which were, in his words, "true *entrepots* of imported merchandise."

Tauxier gives us a better picture of the goods found in the markets of Mossi country before the Europeans arrived. His reports list few imported products except salt and kola nuts. The preponderance of goods sold were such local foodstuffs as maize, manioc, peppers, tomatoes, squash, karite or shea butter, locust-bean balls, locust-bean flour, rice and a local variety of potatoes. Other foodstuffs included were honey, beer, butchered meat, chickens, and guinea fowls. Tobacco both for chewing and smoking was also available, and so was hemp for making rope. Raw cotton, cotton thread, cloth and tailored cotton garments were also present, and so was indigo for dyeing the cotton materials. Other goods included hides, sandals, pouches, amulets, iron items such as axes, hoes, knives, scythes, locks, clubs and spearpoints, bracelets and anklets made of copper by the lost-wax process, baskets, mats and hats made out of local grasses, pottery, pipes and wooden stools (Tauxier 1912 : 466 ff.). By 1914 Mangin could add little to this list of local products, sold in the markets, but added such foreign items as "matches, glass trinkets, handkerchiefs, basins, dishes, perfumes, and even firecrackers" (Mangin 1921 : 53).

The markets of contemporary Mossi society contain all of the articles found in pre-European times and those seen there by Mangin in 1914. In the larger markets one now can find such additional items as bicycles, razor blades, plastic raincoats and other plastic products, and the latest "rock 'n roll" records from the United States. The goods found in the smaller district and village markets tend to be of the traditional variety. But even here it is possible to buy refined cane sugar, matches, plastic necklaces, shoe polish, nail polish, toilet water, glass beads, costume jewelry, chinaware, and glass and enamel containers. In some of the smaller markets it is even possible to buy wheat bread made of imported flour, and bottled beer and soda water. The more different types of goods entering the larger markets, the richer the variety found in the smaller markets, since local merchants are quick to take advantage of the prestige value of any new produce and introduce it into the rural areas. The only barrier to this type of commercial activity is the relative poverty of the rural people.

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in the adoption of this currency as the medium of exchange in most markets.[11] The one-franc piece and coins of smaller denominations were those most often used because they were ideally suited to the petty trading that took place in the markets. The franc even became the standard of value in the larger markets, but one receives only 3 local francs for a five-franc note C.F.A. or seven francs for a ten-franc note C.F.A. These changes in value seem to occur by common consensus, since it is impossible to discover who it was that changed the exchange rate. A further fact is that many Europeans remain unaware of these changes since they seldom go to the local markets themselves. When they do go and insist upon the official exchange rate, the "unofficial" market chief appears and takes over the situation, giving the *nansara* ("conqueror" or "master," the way in which every European is regarded) what he wishes.

While the equivalence between the cowrie, the old brass franc, and the franc C.F.A. works splendidly when products are sold in small quantities, I found the system difficult to understand when more expensive goods are traded. For example, when one buys meat, an expensive item, the butcher accepts either the official francs or the local currency and gives change in both. The difficulty here is that since the butcher uses no scales, one is never sure about the price or about the system of value the butcher is using. The most that can be done if one does not receive as much meat as expected is to haggle with the butcher until he adds more. However, this haggling leaves unresolved the problem of the value of one's official money in terms of the unofficial money, and the product which it is intended to buy. One is thus left with the *impression* that there must be an internal consistency to the exchange system, or barring this, that the local people accept the system as it is as a matter of expediency. On the other hand, the vendors of products with fixed prices such as matches, cigarettes and the like appear to make differential profits when they

(11) Mangin (1921 : 61–62) reports that the Mossi had great difficulty obtaining the five-franc piece which they needed to pay their taxes because the "Europeans who live in Mossi country, including all the riflemen and provincial guards do not put into circulation a quarter of the five-franc pieces which are required each year from the natives. At first the Mossi were taken by surprise and had to give 10 or even 15,000 cowries to obtain this famous coin, this *greegree* which was to free them from all difficulties with the white man. And yet at the official rate of exchange this coin is worth 5,000 cowries. Nowadays it is very difficult to find a native willing to give this much for one of the coins. The usual exchange rate varies from 3,500 to 4,000 cowries: the French currency has been depreciated. This must mean that the natives find elsewhere —through trading— this indispensable coin. They know that the tax must be paid every year, and instead of waiting till the last minute, as soon as they have accumulated the necessary cowries they secure the five-franc pieces from those who have fetched them from far away. The coins flow into the country, and the rate of exchange goes down."

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436 use one type of currency rather than another. For example, a petty
435 trader often buys a package of European cigarettes for 20 francs
443 C.F.A. in the Wagadougou market for retail in the local markets. Here he sells some individual cigarettes at the price of two for 5 francs C.F.A., some at two for 3 old-fashioned francs (making a total of about 21 francs C.F.A.). The vendors are fully aware of this profit differential, but make no attempt to insist on one currency over the other. Furthermore, they appeared indifferent when I suggested that I planned to take advantage of the price differential which I suspected in the two systems. It appears that they believe it would be a waste of time to try to obtain the profit differential.

437 Barter as a form of exchange had just about disappeared from the
435 larger markets in Mossi country, but it exists alongside the use of
443 currency in the local markets, especially in connection with foodstuffs
[178] and other vegetable commodities. People tend to resort to barter when they wish to exchange a specific product for another. Thus, a woman who normally sells rice for currency sometimes will suddenly refuse to accept money and insist on exchanging the rice for cotton or peanuts. The bartering then takes the form of a half-calabash of rice for a half-calabash of either peanuts or cotton, depending upon which products are desired. This equivalence seems always to be maintained regardless of the currency value of rice, cotton, or peanuts at the market on the day in question. For example, a woman who was looking for persons with whom she could exchange peanuts for rice and she refused to sell peanuts to me. I asked why she would not sell the peanuts and then take the money and buy rice with it. She said that if she did so, she would suffer a dual loss: first, in selling the peanuts, each valued at 100 cowries (one-half franc of unofficial currency) for 5 francs. I counted the nuts, which amounted to about 120, and then asked for the customary *lenga* (bonus) and received 36 more peanuts worth 1.5 franc. On the next market day I observed that peanuts were not being sold but only bartered for cotton which was being sold. I decided to test the system. I bought 2 old-fashioned francs' worth of cotton at 100 cowries a ball, and took them over to the woman bartering peanuts for cotton. She accepted the balls of cotton, measured them in a calabash, and then gave me the same volume of peanuts in exchange. I counted the nuts and discovered that I had received some 200 nuts for only 2 francs. When I discussed this experiment with some of the people, they admitted knowing
[123] about this practice and said that they did this at times. I then suggested that it would be possible to manipulate the system to one's advantage, but was again greeted with a show of indifference by most of my auditors. One man eventually said that I would lose because prices changed.

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changed. I remain ignorant of what the real facts are, but still suspect that it may be possible to speculate on the system.

Barter is very specific in Mossi markets in the sense that not every product can be bartered against every other product. Some days rice would be bartered for cotton, and on other days only for peanuts and vice versa. It is not possible either to exchange vegetable produce for livestock, even though livestock may be exchanged for livestock. Sometimes people take chickens or guinea hens to market to exchange for goats or sheep, and often these animals are exchanged for young cattle. What is not at all clear, however, is whether or not the people see the value of the things exchanged in terms of currency value, or in terms of some value which has no reference to the European currency system. The ordinary people in the markets, like ordinary people everywhere, are not concerned with these problems as long as they believe that they are conducting their commercial activities with equity and are deriving satisfaction from them.

The most significant feature of all the Mossi markets is the segregation of certain merchants into certain areas. The makers and sellers of one product are found only in one part of the market, and anyone wishing to buy or sell these products must go to the place where they are traded. The other type of segregation is by reference to the trader's place of origin. For example, a woman who sells beer would be found in the section of the market where beer is sold, but she would be found sitting with her back towards the village and facing toward the direction from which she came. There are often some variations on this pattern. For example, if there are a large number of traders with one type of product, they will form a large open circle in which each person will sit with his or her back towards the point of origin. Inside of this circle, and separated by a few feet, would be another circle of people selling another product with their faces toward the general direction from which they came. Sitting with their backs to the people of this circle would be other people forming another circle and selling one type of product. These people would have their backs towards the region from which they came. When the group of persons selling one type of product is very small, they may form a small circle in a corner of the market with their backs towards their points of origin. All of these patterns often exist simultaneously in Mossi markets, but it is obvious that two basic configurations prevail. One configuration is in terms of goods, and facilitates trading. The other configuration is a social one and facilitates the social interaction which is an integral part of the Mossi market. This seating pattern makes it easier to find one's friends, to converse and drink with them, to find someone through whom to send mes-

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443 571 sages to specific villages, to find the help needed in the event of a fight, and finally to find an escape route by which one can leave in the event of trouble.

443 463 563 The vendors in the larger markets of Mossi country include Yoruba, Hausa and other ethnic groups, many of whose members were born in Mossi country and have never visited the land of their fathers. The lives of these people are usually centered around the markets; where the markets are held every day, many of the men, women and children of these foreign groups spend almost all of their lives at the [439] markets. In marked contrast to the Mossi, they usually sell products of foreign provenience, whether African or European, and seldom deal in the local products. These vendors are tolerated by the Mossi and are valued for their commerce, but are always regarded as outsiders. And as outsiders the markets do not belong to them, but only to the Mossi. Even so, the Mossi do not really like the larger markets. 443 829 True, one can buy all kinds of wonderful goods on the large markets, but to the Mossi, a market is more than a place where one goes to buy and sell, even though everyone who goes there tries to do some of both.

443 462 438 439 There is a marked division of labor among the vendors in a Mossi market—a division which can be seen at its best on the local markets. Here only the women sell cooked food, beer, millet, rice, peanuts, shea-butter, tobacco, and all of the other locally grown vegetables and vegetable products, except cotton which may also be sold by a man. In contrast, women do not sell such local products as cotton cloth, hemp, jewelry, iron implements and leather goods, which are the province of the men. Only men may butcher and sell animals and meat in the market. And they alone control the commerce in foreign food articles such as salt and dried fish. Both men and women sell the valuable imported kola nut, but only men sell goods of European manufacture such as cigarettes, matches, sugar, mirrors and so on. [857] Small girls sell calabashes of water to everyone, and small boys wander through the market selling single cigarettes, bundles of a few matches, single lumps of sugar, chickens and guinea fowls, and skewers of roasted meat.

443 437 432 There is little competition about someone else having "stolen" a customer. The reason for this is mainly that every person in the market is a potential customer of everyone else. Normally, a buyer simply moves from seller to seller sampling the goods if that is possible (some unscrupulous men can even get drunk in the process of "sampling" beer) and trying to get the best bargain. No seller would think of running after a customer, and customers seldom, if ever, move away from a vendor in the hope that he would be called back to be sold the article at a lower price.

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to be sold the article at a lower price. The result is that the pace of commerce in a Mossi market is somewhat relaxed, but the lack of intense competition prevents a great deal of hositility and quarreling among the market people.

The amount of small trading which takes place in a Mossi market is fantastic, so much so that one gains the impression that some people trade simply for the sake of trading. Everyone tries to get money so that he or she can buy some desired object, but it is impossible for one to obtain a clear idea of what kind of profit, if any, people make from their commerce. In fact, the idea of a profit does not seem to be important when people are selling their own products. Most people only think about profit when they buy things to resell—whether these things are of African or European manufacture. This, incidentally, is one of the reasons why the prices of foodstuffs are about 10 per cent lower in the country districts than at Wagadougou, and concommitently, why imported products are 10 to 20 per cent higher in the rural districts than at Wagadougou where they are bought. When a woman takes such products as cotton, beans or millet to market, she may gross about 100 francs in the course of the day. But out of this she may give a few francs to her husband to buy kola nuts, a few francs to her daughter to buy a plastic necklace, and spend the rest for a cotton skirt, a piece of meat and condiments for her sauces. Men whose wives do not bring many goods to market must usually give them about 100 francs to spend on the various products the family needs. There are no official restrictions on the kinds of goods which may or may not be sold in the Mossi markets. In pre-European times slaves and eunuchs were the common stock-in-trade of the major markets and of some of the smaller ones as well. The only active supervision that existed and still exists concerns the butchering of meat. Every person who sells meat in the market must exhibit the skin of the butchered animal in a public place so that there will be no question as to the ownership of the animal. If the meat in question is the remains of a cow killed and half-eaten by a lion, then the village or district chief must be notified before the meat enters the market. The person in charge of this task used to be, and often still is, a man called the Kos Naba, a kind of sales chief. He also formerly doubled as a tax collector for the rulers and chiefs. Another official, the Raga Naba, where he still exists, is more concerned with protecting the lives and property of the people who trade at the markets, but he also supervises the sale of some commodities there and formerly also collected taxes for his superior.

In pre-European times, every important Mossi prince and district chief had the counterpart of a Kos Naba and Raga Naba, to collect taxes in their markets.

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443 taxes in their markets. The French abolished both of these offices
554 when they took over the country, because they looked upon them as
651 purely exploitative rather than regulatory agents. But like so many
656 other Mossi political institutions which the French have "abolished,"
178 the Kos Naga and Raga Naba persist in many of the districts, and per-
649 haps even in such large centers as Wagadougou. These officials persist
829 because one of the basic assumptions of the Mossi is that everything
825 must have a "chief." They believe that even the animals in the bush have chiefs, and if men, too, did not have chiefs then social life would be chaos. Thus, in the rural areas many or most district chiefs have retained their market officials even though the roles of these officials have become highly attenuated and so secretive that their existence is often denied.

175 Taxes collected at the market places played an important part in
443 supporting the traditional political hierarchy of the Mossi people.
651 The Kos Naba collected 250 cowries in taxes for every beef cattle
649 slaughtered at the market and took their humps and gave them to a palace official called the Nemdo Naba (meat chief) for distribution in the royal household. He also collected 250 cowries on every cow sold there, but did not usually tax goats and sheep. In lieu of this he occasionally took a head or two of these animals from each herd that passed through the market and sent them to the palace kitchens. Donkeys were also taxed at the rate of 200 cowries per head sold in the market. Horses sold to the nobility were not taxed, but those exported were taxed about 300 cowries.

175 The Raga Naba collected the taxes on other commodities sold at
443 market. Cotton weavers paid him taxes according to the size of their
651 bolts of cloth, and cotton producers paid as much as 20 cowries on
463 especially large sales of their raw produce. The tailors and dyers paid no fixed tax on their wares, but were asked to send clothing to the palace. Every donkey- or ox-load of salt which entered the market place was assessed a tax of 300 cowries. The smiths were not taxed in cowries, but had to supply the wives of the Moro Naba with hoes and the palace personnel with arrowheads, spearpoints and iron clubs. The jewelers also sent bracelets as presents to the ruler. There were no fixed taxes on cereals, vegetables and cooked food sold at market, but each day the Raga Naba, accompanied by several pages or retainers carrying baskets, went from vendor to vendor taking several calabash-fuls of their produce for use in the palace. In addition, the vendors of cooked food had to feed the young grooms of the Moro Naba who were not regularly fed by the palace household. The beer sellers, too, while they were not assessed taxes, contributed a good percentage of their beverage to palace and market personnel who demanded the

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customary "taste" with greater frequency and freedom than did ordinary buyers. But the most valuable tax collected by the Raga Naba was on the sale of slaves, whose buyers paid a tax of 1,000 cowries per head.

There is some evidence, mainly from Europeans, that the Mossi occasionally may have found the market taxes prohibitive. Binger reports that during his visit to the Mossi in 1888, the high taxes exacted by the Moro Naba were "one of the causes which placed Wagadougou in second place [as a market town] and which made Mane the commercial capital of Mossi country" (Binger 1892 : 467). Binger, himself, was caught in the institutionalized gift system and wrote sarcastically: "The day of the market [at Wagadougou] the receipts are good. People bring every thing to the palace including millet as well as hoes or peanuts, and everything is accepted. *All this giving is left to the generosity of the customers . . .*" (Binger 1892 : 465) (his italics). Even so, one cannot be sure that the Mossi felt the same way about paying taxes to their rulers as Binger felt. There is, incidentally, always an air of mutual recriminations among the Mossi and their rulers about the level of reciprocation between them. The people admit that the chiefs are indispensable; yet they complain that they are greedy—they "eat" too much. The chiefs insist that it is difficult to rule a territory and complain that the people are ungrateful.

SOCIAL AND RITUAL ASPECTS OF THE MARKETPLACE

Although the offices of Kos Naba and Raga Naba have been abolished officially, these officials still exist in many Mossi districts, and even when they do not exist, some men acting in their stead appropriate commodities in the markets for the chiefs. Furthermore, the *nakomce* (plural of *nabiga*—chief's child) or nobles still wander about the market places taking handfuls of kola nuts, peanuts and everything they need without the people becoming angry or complaining to the French about it. Once when I visited a market in the company of a *nabiga*, the local Raga Naba came up to where we were buying meat and indicated to the butcher that one of his customers was a *nabiga* and that he should treat him accordingly. It is not because of ignorance that the market people continue to grant these privileges to the nobles and the chiefs, but rather because they believe that only the market officials, and not the Europeans, can take care of the markets.

One of the most important tasks of the Raga Naba (or in the absence of this official, the Kos Naba) is to propitiate the *tengkouga* in the market place, or supervise the sacrifices which the *tengsobas* make to them. The task of the market spirits is believed to be so difficult—

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443 554 776 782 due to the bickering, quarreling and even fighting they have to prevent by cooling the tempers of the market people—that they become quite angry. When the spirits are not satisfied, they fail in their tasks and real trouble breaks out in the market, disrupting the trading; and if they are not pacified they may even cause the death of the market officials.[12]

In the days before the market officials were banned, these sacrifices were performed regularly. At that time the Raga Naba simply asked the Kos Naba to seize the appropriate animal in the market to perform the rite. The problem today is [illegible] the French have abolished [648] the office of Raga Naba, and in some districts have prevented the chief from even naming one secretly, the markets in the latter local- [208] ities are considered "dangerous markets." Once a market acquires such a reputation, people do not like to visit it because they fear that they would get into fights or quarrels. Not only this, but it is believed that if a market has been without a Raga Naba for a long time, the *tengkquga* there become so angry for being neglected that they kill [123] the first chief appointed to it. This was the reality or belief behind a series of misadventures of which I was the victim.

123 443 554 656 I had spent an entire day in a market, and on returning home could not find my pen. The next morning I sent an assistant to the chief telling him about the loss and asking him to have an announcement made in the market on the next market day that I would pay a handsome reward to whomever should find and deliver the pen. The chief sent back a reply saying that since there was no Raga Naba, he would have the Kos Naba acquaint the people with my loss. On the day of the market, I waited until midday, when most of the people had arrived, and then went to see whether the Kos Naba had any news of the pen. I checked with several of my friends to see whether they had heard about the pen and discovered, to my chagrin, that no an- [564] nouncement had been made about it. I went and told the Kos Naba that the people were not hearing about the pen and suggested that one way to do so would be to have the Binderes (drummers and griots) circulate through the market announcing the loss. The Kos Naba refused to do this, and when I enlisted the aid of the chief's secretary, he, too, said that it could not be done because there was no Raga Naba. I had some notes on the institution of the Raga Naba, but as I did not know everything about it, I was, therefore, frankly puzzled

(12) Zahan (1954 : 371) states that "the place where all kinds of merchandise accumulate and where strangers come is a place charged with forces. In time, these forces build up to such a point within the precincts of the market that some purifications are necessary to liberate them. To omit making them would expose the participants to excitements leading to brawls and compromising the place of the transactions."

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and a bit peeved at not being able to put my idea into practice. I next sought the advice and consolation of an elder noble who listened quite calmly and then said: "The customs of these kafirs (heathens) are foolish." Being a Moslem, my friend was very often critical of the pagans, and could be relied upon to explain why their customs were "foolish." He said that in former days the Raga Naba would have climbed a tree and announced to the crowd any message from the district chief. Moreover, he was the custodian of all lost articles and restored them to their owners. The Moslem said that my request could not be granted because there was no Raga Naba, and that probably there would never be another. When the French first banned the institution, the local chief dismissed the Raga Naba. With the message of peace, however, the market became so dangerous that the chief tried to appoint another ex-serf to the job. This man soon died, and his successor died shortly after being appointed. Since that time the chief has made no attempt to name a new market chief.

With this new knowledge I called my aide and inquired from him whether this information was true and if so, why did he not tell me the true state of affairs. His reply was that he did not wish to say that the market was bad because the local people believed that they had solved the problem of the lack of a Raga Naba. When the last Raga Naba died, the chief decided not to name a new one, but in order to placate the market *tengkouga*, he ordered his *tengsoba* to make sacrifices to it. It was believed that these sacrifices would be acceptable as long as the officiant did not bear the title of Raga Naba. The other functions of the Raga Naba, such as collecting goods for the chief and preserving peace in the market, were taken over by the Kos Naba and another servant of the chief. However, the Kos Naba had to be careful lest he overstep his authority in such a way as would acquaint the *tengkouga* with the real situation. In my case, the chief was acting by trying to get the Kos Naba to acquaint the people with my loss in as inconspicuous a manner as possible. The consensus was that the Kos Naba would have risked his life had he made any kind of announcement to the market people, because the *tengkouga* would have thought that he was the new Raga Naba, and if not contented with the people would have killed him. Under these circumstances, I withdrew my request. I discovered later that my pen was not lost but had been in the hut all the time.

Those chiefs who have succeeded in retaining their market officials even secretly have been able to maintain their control over public behavior there. The Mossi are fairly law-abiding despite the persistence among them of a warrior tradition. Every man who goes to market, or anywhere for that matter, usually carries a baton over his

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443 shoulder; but when he arrives in the market, he calmly places his
654 weapon on top of one of the sheds before he makes his rounds. The
626 women do not carry any weapons to market except their "words" but
411 even these are not often used because of the desire to avoid hostility—
[578] which the Mossi do not like to have disrupt one of their major institutions.

443 The rural market is the center of Mossi social life, and friends
671 as well as enemies meet within its confines. What Mangin wrote some forty years ago is still true: "Every self-respecting Mossi—man or woman, child or elder—must go to market at least once in a while,
[297] handsome clothes" (Mangin 1921 : 53). Except for the Moslems who
[184] are now experimenting with a form of Purdah, there are few persons who do not go to market. The absence of someone from the market for more than two consecutive occasions is a sure sign of illness, travel, or family crisis. As one man said to me, "I must go to market, and when I get there I look for three persons: my girl friend, my debtor and my enemy. If I do now know whether any of them are at the market I am ill at ease. And when I go to the market and do not see them all, the market is not good."

443 The lively character of the Mossi market will be discussed later,
671 but throughout this kaleidoscope of activities certain consistencies
576 can be discerned. For example, one notices many different kinds of greetings and salutations in the market place, but each one of them correctly indicates the exact relation or relationship between the persons involved. Young girls on passing each other on one of their innumerable circuits of the market bend their knees slightly and place both of their cupped hands on their own breasts. Only then will they stop and exchange news. At the end of the conversation they repeat the same greeting and continue their rounds. Both girls and women greet casual male acquaintances in the same way, but
[512] invariably kneel if the male stops and talks to them. Women some-
[602] time kneel when speaking to each other, but always do so when addressing any male relative of a respected category, who may then send them on errands such as buying tobacco from the vendors. A man who meets a female benefactor, such as a woman who has given medi-
[562] cine to one of his children, invariably kneels down before her. She may do the same thing out of respect for his male status. However,
[603] when a man meets either his mother-in-law or his father's sister, he
[604] is the one to kneel down in order to greet her. Two men who are equals normally shake hands, but if not, the junior in status or in age kneels down before his elder or superior. Sometimes a high status man will prevent his greeter from kneeling by raising him. When

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greeting a lower status benefactor, a man will get down and greet him from a kneeling position. It is because of this elaborate system of greeting, with the many opportunities thus provided for one person to slight another, that many important persons never go to the market. As a rule, the failure of any one person to give the required greeting to another when they meet in the market place is always an indication of strained relations between them.

The persons from whom an individual may buy goods, and the kinds of goods which may be purchased by one individual from another, are governed by convention and social relationships. A person may not buy anything from a relative except European goods. A man cannot buy any but cooked food in the market place, and often he asks a female relative or a passing female to buy it for him. To do the contrary is held to be unmanly and indicative of a bad character. for her. She would hate to have people believe that she has no male relative to weave it for her, or what is more likely, that she is too lazy to spin the cotton thread which would then be woven for her. A woman may purchase any type of commodity from other women, but she must be careful not to patronize men who are known to be libertines or with whom she is suspected of having an affair. She must also be careful about running errands for men, since people know that men often use this device to establish amorous relationships with women. Men also use this device to give presents, or to arrange secret meetings with them. If any man sees a female relative involved in any of these misadventures, he chases her away and more than likely curses the man, if he does not fight him. In any event, he warns the man to leave the woman alone.

The market is one of the few places where men and women can initiate relationships not sanctioned by their relatives. Under normal conditions marriages are arranged between unrelated individuals through the lineage members who establish "friendly" relationships. Two friends might ask their lineage heads for women to exchange as wives or the "friend" who has received more gifts from the other will give over a wife. Because the older men most often have goods and women at their disposal, they are usually the ones who receive wives. The result is that most young men have no wives, and until they inherit wives from lineage members, are continually seeking to establish intimate relations with women whom they meet on the market place. The technique which a young man employes to gain the favors of a woman he sees at market is highly stereotyped. First of all, he must ascertain that the woman in question is not a member of his maximal lineage or married to a member of his own lineage. A responsible

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man even refrains from making overtures to a woman whose husband's female relatives may be married to a member of his own lineage. He fears that a wronged husband may have the wives of his lineage brothers recalled, thus causing dissension within and between the two lineages. If none of these complications are present, a man seeks out a person who knows the woman and sends a message declaring his intentions. If the response is favorable, the man then buys four large kola nuts (four being the number for a woman), wraps them together with 44 francs, and send them to his lady. This procedure may be followed on subsequent market days, the two properties ever coming into direct contact with each other. Finally, however, a rendezvous is arranged, and on the pretense of leaving the market to visit a relative for several days, the woman goes instead to her lover's village.

These casual affairs started at the market sometimes become quite serious, and if for any reason they are sanctioned by the relatives of either the man or the woman, they often lead to the breakup of a marriage. And since the market is the place where disputants of any sort most likely come into contact, it is here that fights over "stolen" wives break out.

This pattern of extramarial relationships centering around the market place is so common among the Mossi that the younger men, and even some of the older ones, are disappointed with the "market" when their mistresses do not appear. Mossi men who sit under the shelters around the market place can usually give an inquirer not only the name of a woman, the name and village of her husband and father, but also the name and village of her paramour. Characteristically enough, they are always "ignorant" of the escapades of their own female relatives or of the wives of their lineage members. The only time when men act as though their relatives might be involved in extramarital affairs is when for some purpose or another a man has to recall a wife or daughter who has gone to visit a relative in another village or district. Regardless of how pressing the problem may be, a man will seldom go directly to his father-in-law's house to recall the woman. He goes to the market nearest to his in-laws' village, and seeks his wife there. If he does not find her or any of her relatives, he goes to the part of the market in which people from her village sell their products and sends a message to her family that he will come for her the next day, or that he would like her to come home.

A market place is also one of the best places to look for news of a runaway wife, or of any stranger in an area. The Mossi say that women have footprints like an elephant in that they can be found quite easily, but that the footprints are always clearest in the market.

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What this really means is that the market is the main communication center of Mossi society and news of happenings in the region can be heard there. If a person is in an area one can be sure that the people in the market will know about him, or that he will sooner or later visit the market.

The young men who have returned from work in the cacao fields or towns of Ghana and the Ivory Coast add a great deal of color and excitement to the rural markets of contemporary Mossi country. During the time these young men spend away, they give a great deal of thought and planning to the show they hope to put on when they make the grand tour (*mane do*) of their district's markets when the day many migrants return to their homes, they wait for that Friday before they show themselves publicly.

On the morning of that day, the typical migrant dresses in his best clothes, lends the remainder of his wardrobe to relatives, and together they go to pay homage to the chief during the morning ceremony (*Wend pous yan*). The migrant offers the chief such presents as a small amount of money, an article of clothing or kola nuts, and replies to the chief's questions about the health and welfare of all Mossi in the area whence the migrant came, the whereabouts of "lost" migrants, the nature of the work the migrants were doing, and so on. As soon as the young man receives the chief's permission to leave, he goes to the market where he is quickly surrounded by *griots* who accompany him in periodic circumambulations of the market place, drumming and singing praises in honor of his ancestry. The migrant is also greeted warmly by his many friends to whom he then gives presents of money, beer and kola nuts. He acknowledges the general praise for having brought goods and clothing for his relatives and takes pride in seeing these relatives dressed in the cloths and clothing he has brought them. If young and unmarried, the migrant also seeks to take advantage of his new-found importance to make the first overtures to available young women or to renew his relationship with former paramours. Towards evening before going home, he rewards the *griots* with money and bear. Many a migrant attempts to prolong this feeling of grandeur by visiting other markets and by dressing up on subsequent grand market days, but after a few weeks he is re-incorporated into the ordinary market routine, and has to make room for the other newly-arrived migrants.

The market is also the place where important rites marking the changing social status of individuals are carried out. Under normal circumstances, the ceremonies attending the birth of a Mossi child are performed at home. When a woman has a number of stillbirths or

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When a woman has a number of stillbirths or
845 loses her children when they are still babies, however, it is believed
761 than these children were embodiments of the same *kinkirsi* (spirits)
776 who must be tricked into remaining on earth when it returns, and
443 the market place is chosen as the site for this trickery. As soon as such
851 a woman gives birth to a child, and old woman places it in a basket
443 and on the next market day takes it to the market place. Her intention is to "sell" the child in the hope that it would not die if owned by someone other than its mother. The old woman walks around the market place shouting: "I have something to sell!" Invariably a man offer to buy it. The price varies with the fortune of the man, but traditionally the amount paid has been 500 cowries or their equivalent. The man takes the child for a few minutes and then returns it to its vendor, telling her in a loud voice so that the kinkirsi will hear: "I would like you to give this child to 'X' (the child's mother) to be reared for me and I will pay for its upbringing and will come
[551] for the child in a few years. He then gives the child the name *Yamba*
[553] (slave), or *Yemdaogo* (male slave) if male and *Yempoko* (female slave) if a girl. The old woman then returns the child to its mother, relating what has passed in the market and indicating who the "owner" of her child is. The "owner" of the child may not even see the child again, and naturally does not take this ownership seriously. In many cases the money with which he bought the child was given to him by the child's father.

852 The market also plays an important part in the circumcision and
443 incision ceremonies of Mossi boys and girls. For about two to three months after the actual operations the young children, especially the boys are secluded in the circumcision lodges or compounds and have almost no contact with the village population. Their re-introduction to society always takes place on the great market day. The parents of the children buy new clothing for them this occasion, and on the appointed day the boys or girls parade together in the market and are offered gifts by the market people. Later in the day, they are dismissed and individually feted by their relatives.

585 Owing to the relatively unceremonious nature of Mossi marriages,
76 the market does not play a role in Mossi weddings. However, the
554 same thing cannot be said about the last important *rite de passage*,
443 especially the funeral of a chief, or important elder. Prior to the intervention of the French, and to a lesser extent even today, the announcement of the death of an important ruler was seen as the breakdown of law and order and was ritually dramatized by a popular raid
[565] on the markets throughout the territories (Skinner : ms). During the interregnum the vendors are subject to constant raids by members of

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the noble class, whose actions embody the ideology that the exercise of sovereignty is a corporate right which reverts to all of them when the head ruler dies. Much of this raiding is symbolic and does not interrupt market activities.

Many of the ceremonies connected with the funeral of chiefs and respected deceased elders take place in the market. Sometime between the interment of the dead person, the *keema*, and the first burial ceremonies, the sister-in-law *(dakia)* of the dead man in her role as joking relative—a role she plays until the funeral ceremonies are completed—impersonates him in the market place. On the day chosen for this rite the *dakia* dresses in the clothes of the *keema* and goes to market. While there, she acts as she observed her brother-in-law to have acted in the past: she circles the market and buys goods; she buys beer from his favorite beer seller and drinks with his friends; and for a moment, at least, she sits with his old cronies in their favorite haunts and takes part in their discussions. She may even be serenaded by *griots* who sing praises in honor of "her" ancestors, and she rewards them before leaving the market place that evening.

The market is the scene of an important ritual during the final funeral ceremonies, which are held about one year after a man was buried. On the morning of this ceremony the female relatives of the *keema*, led by his eldest daughter and his *dakia*, appear in the market and go from stall to stall buying all the things the deceased used in his lifetime. These include meat, *zumbala* (locust bean balls), cotton, tobacco, salt, kola nuts, peppers, *kumba* (a tomato), cakes, cooked millet-mush balls, potatoes, etc. When they have gathered all of these things, they retire to a spot near the market where they lay out all the foodstuff in baskets. In the meantime, the drummers play the royal airs, if the dead man was a chief, or ordinary rhythms if he was a commoner. Then the *keema's* eldest daughter places a basket on her head and, accompanied by four men, leads a procession of drummers and of the other women, also with their baskets, around the market. While this procession is circling the market three times in honor of the deceased, the *dakia*, carrying a very old basket containing the stalest food she could find, weaves back and forth through the marching throng making a nuisance of herself. After the third round the marchers return to their assembly point whence the eldest daughter and some of the older women now rush into the market, stealing merchandise from the stalls and placing it in their baskets. This assault is often so quickly done that it is fairly successful. The raiders then join the other mourners at the assembly point, where with bowed heads they listen respectfully while the chief drummer recites the genealogy of the *keema* and tells him that the people from the surrounding villages

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and districts were present to honor him. This being completed, the *griots* are paid, everyone rises and shouts *Ne Wardo* (the salutation at funerals), and that part of the funeral ceremony during which a man takes leave of the market community is concluded. Now his relatives, descendants and friends all return to the market, whose sights and sounds make it an integral part of the life cycle of the Mossi—the one institution of their society in which almost everyone participates actively.

Preparation for a market day, especially the tri-weekly Friday market or *Raga kasanga*, usually begins on Thursday. This day is characterized by a great deal of activity: preparing the commodities which are to be sold the next day, washing body and clothes, and combing hair. The women who prepare the beer and fried foods work late into the night preparing their wares, and a visit to the homes of the *griots* finds them preparing their drums. The little boys who go to the roadside to chant Moslem prayers to the passers-by, and the little girls who sell water to these strangers redouble their efforts until late on Thursday night to get enough money to buy presents in the market the next day. Finally, when it is quite late and the beer-making fires are out, everyone retires until the morning of the market.

At 7:00 A.M. on Friday the market is deserted except for a leper who sweeps out the stalls of the sellers in return for bits of food or presents of money. Looking at the empty stalls, one has a certain amount of difficulty imagining that this spot will be crowded with human beings five hours hence. But one is also conscious of the fact that even at this early hour scores of persons have already left their homes in distant villages and are on their way to market loaded with produce and with high hopes for the day. About 9:00 A.M. the first women arrive, balancing net-covered bundles on their heads, and take their positions in the various sections of the market with either face or back pointing to the direction from which they came. By 9:30 A.M. the butchers have arrived with their bleating sheep and goats and an aged cow. The first beer sellers have also arrived and are giving "sips" to men before they settle down to sustained drinking.

The pace of the market quickens about 10:30, and in the distance the first tap of the Bindere's drum resounds. All of a sudden, the market seems to have become a giant magnet, drawing long lines of people towards it along every path and from every direction. Women dressed in brightly colored print cloths and dresses, with babies straddling their backs and the inevitable bundles on their head, saunter into their places. Young children run ahead of their mothers or stumble behind them. Those vendors of European products who customarily transport their goods in boxes on bicycles arrive in the

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market and set up their small tables to display all types of goods from trinkets to single lumps of sugar. And the more numerous young men, who have no goods but have money in their pockets, go to the leaf-covered sheds, place their weapons on top of them, and take seats from which to view the passing parade. Imperceptibly, the hum in the market increases as people find their places and greet one another with *Ne Raga*, the market greeting, until by 11:30 A.M. the whole market reverberates with sounds of drumming, cries of vendors, and the shrill voice of water hawkers and juvenile vendors. Now the market is in full swing.

From midday until about 3:30 P.M., the Mossi market is a sea of humanity—talking, laughing, arranging rendezvous, quarreling, selling, buying, parading, and (where youngsters are concerned) often crying for want of money to buy a desired object. The return of migrants lends additional color and excitement to the market as these young people walk about in their new clothes, encouraging the drummers to sing louder praises, the maidens to feel jealous of the clothes of the migrants' female relatives, the former migrants to reminisce about the days when they too had bright new clothes, and the young boys to dream of going off one day to obtain the things they need.

Men, noting that their female relatives are spending too much time looking over the wares of a vendor of European products or of the kola-nut seller, wander over ostensibly to help in the purchase but really to prevent love affairs. The failure to observe such a precaution may be the cause of the shouting a man hears in the distance, and off he hurries to see whether a lineage brother or a friend may need his aid. He may either get into the battle himself, or aid the Raga Naba and the other elders to chase the battlers out of the market place, or to take them to the chief. This may indeed restore some peace and good fellowship to the market.

Elders, now more interested in beer than in other pleasures, pass the heat of the market day under the beer sellers' shed. From time to time one of them may be interrupted by a young man bringing him three kola nuts, one or two of which are immediately broken and given to friends. However, when an oldster, whether a drinking pagan or a Moslem teetotaler, sees or overhears a young man buying four kolas, he may frown or smile in the knowledge that mischief is afoot. Loud-voiced predictions of the consequences of evil-doing may suddenly disturb the merrymakers as American missionaries speaking in perfect More (the language of the Mossi) appear and harangue the market people. Then, as suddenly, the *Americadamba* depart in their large cars, and the curious pagans, amused Catholics or hostile Moslems who had gathered to hear the gospel return to

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their "evil" and "non-evil" ways. A little later the young men who possess bicycles may be seen suddenly hurrying to avoid the other *nansara*, this time, the French official, who comes into the market to apprehend those individuals who have not bought a bicycle license. All the *nansara* know that the market is the best place to find a Mossi.

Towards 3:00 P.M. the matrons in the market, having sold most of their own goods and bought those which they need, make the last rounds to see whether there are any bargains to be had. In their rounds the women may be badgered by sons, daughters and other relatives, but seldom by husbands, for extra francs to buy kolas or tobacco to bridge them over the two non-market days. Or the women themselves may seek out their male relatives to buy kola or goods, from the stranger who is making the rounds of the local markets. By this time of day the market place is emptying—at first this happens so imperceptibly that one does not notice it. However, by 4:00 P.M. a mass exodus begins as women collect their little children, hitch their babies on their backs, place baskets on their head and set out in the direction of their own villages or to the villages of relatives where they plan to spend time. By this hour also the Bendere are drunk, and for an extra calabash of beer are willing to recount genealogies for which, if sober, they would demand a sheep or goat.

Evening finds the market deserted except for scavenging dogs which hunt the scraps of food dropped by the now departed human beings. The market place finally falls silent, until late at night passing migrants retire there to sleep. These persons leave the market place at dawn to buy food from the women whose hawking cries herald another day of roadside commerce. The women use the profit from this trade to buy goods on the following market days.

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